



**Rhode Island Department of Human Services**

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December 18, 2020

Honorable Patricia A. Serpa, Chairwoman  
House Committee on Oversight  
101 State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairwoman Serpa:

Please accept the attached report as the State's most recent update on the RIBridges system, which covers the reporting period November 16, 2020 – December 15, 2020. This document provides monthly updates on the following topics:

- System performance and improvement
- DHS staffing and employee training
- Pending applications
- SNAP timeliness and lobby/DHS Call Center summaries
- CCAP off-cycle payments
- LTSS interim payments
- Correspondence with federal partners (if any)

We appreciate your continued advocacy on behalf of those we serve, your interest in the health of the RIBridges system and the progress made to address outstanding issues. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CHAWKINS", written in a cursive style.

Courtney E. Hawkins, Director

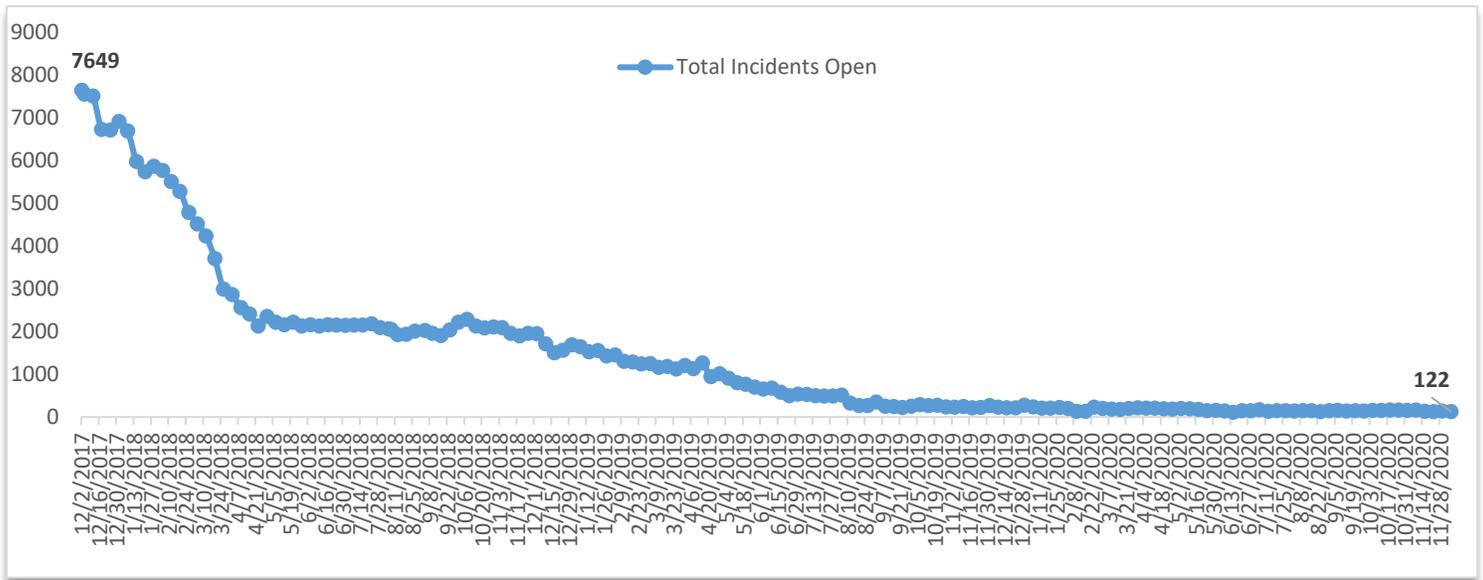


# RI Bridges: Monthly Update December 2020

Our team takes its charge seriously in promoting health, nurturing quality of life and being there for Rhode Islanders when needed. Our oversight of the work on the RIBridges system is an important part of the equation. With system stabilization under our belt, we continue to focus on ensuring full compliance of the system. This report provides an update on our efforts and progress to date.

## SYSTEM PERFORMANCE + IMPROVEMENT

Due to a focused effort on consistent and stable system operations, the number of new and existing incidents (when the system does not operate as expected for a DHS customer, worker or provider) has **decreased by 98 percent** since December 2017. As of December 7, 2020, there were **122** open incidents.



## DHS STAFFING

DHS continues to make progress in hiring candidates for critical positions identified. Since November, DHS hired four employees. The positions are:

- 1 Supervising Eligibility Technician in the Pawtucket Field Office
- 3 Eligibility Technicians dedicated to the Providence Field Office

## DHS TRAINING

### Training Overview

Training Topic	Training Date	# of Training Hours	# of New Staff	# of Current Staff
New Hire Orientation (4 two-hour sessions)	12-7-2020 (2 sessions) 12-8-2020 (2 sessions)	8	3	0
Ex-Parte Training Series (3 three-hour sessions)	12-7-2020 12-8-2020 12-9-2020	9	0	31
Domestic Violence 101 (2-1 and half hour sessions)	12-1-2020 12-8-2020	3	0	40
Knowledge Transfers (2 – half hour sessions)	12-2-2020 12-4-2020	4	0	19
MAGI: Part One (1 two-hour session)	12-10-2020	2	0	8
SNAP Training Series (1 one and half hour session)	11-25-2020	1.5	0	15
RIW Eligibility Concepts (2 three-hour sessions)	11-30-2020	6	0	25
Case Maintenance (1 forty-five-minute session)	11-24-2020	.75	0	4
Customer Service Training: Worker – In – Box (1 half hour session)	11-23-2020	.5	0	7
Multicultural Competency Training: Module One (5 -one and half hour sessions)	11-19-2020 (2 sessions) 12-4-2020 12-10-2020 (2 sessions)	7.5	0	107
Katie Beckett (1 three-hour session)	11-30-2020	3	0	11
Health Income and Resource Coverage (1-3-hour sessions)	11-23-2020	3	0	5
Health Insurance and Income (2-3-hour sessions)	11-16-2020	3	0	18
Customer Relations Training (5 -two-hour sessions)	11-24-2020 12-1-2020 12-2-2020 12-8-2020 12-9-2020	10	0	23
<b>Totals</b>		<b>61.25</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>313*</b>

*\*Current number of staff trained is a duplicate number*

## Workshop Descriptions

**Case Maintenance:** This training focuses on standardizing processes associated with working cases in *RIBridges*. It is a remote training delivered via Zoom. The learning outcomes for the training are as follows:

- Understand the case maintenance checklist
- Finding helpful documents
- Understand proper case maintenance practices

**Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP):** The *SNAP* Training is designed to introduce Eligibility Technicians to *SNAP* program policy and *RIBridges*. The virtual sessions are focused on *SNAP* policy.

**Multicultural Competency Training:** The Multicultural Competence modules offer contextualized, scaffolded, anti-oppression educational workshops for DHS employees. There are four foundational modules that introduce participants to frameworks, concepts, and strategies so DHS personnel are better equipped to advance diversity, equity and inclusion of strategic goals, individually and collectively. The workshops are offered virtually. Each session meets for 1.5-2 hours. The format includes facilitated dialogue activities with individuals and groups.

- **Module One:** *Advancing Anti-Oppression in the Workplace* is the first of the four workshops. This session presents and discusses the multicultural competencies necessary to advance anti-oppression in the workplace (e.g., awareness, understanding, knowledge, interaction, and sensitivity).

**MAGI Part One:** Participants will have acquired a foundation – especially those new to Medical determination – that will lay the foundation for a subsequent session incorporating introductory principles applicable to *RIBridges*. This training session will serve as a hands-on process to combine theory with practice.

Following the conclusion of part one of Introduction to the *Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI)* program, participants will have an increased familiarity with government-provided health insurance programs of the past and present at the federal and state levels, general concepts of eligibility criteria, special population eligibility and the application process for DHS.

**Customer Relations Training:** This training provides information for DHS staff members on strategies to build their customer service skills.

**New Hire Orientation:** The New Employee Orientation (NEO) Program is the first step in welcoming new hires to DHS. Its main objective is to familiarize new employees with the organization, its organizational structure and its policies and procedures.

**Katie Beckett:** Participants in this *Katie Beckett* training will:

- Understand the link between *Medicare* and *Social Security* benefits
- Understand payments made for these benefits from *Social Security*
- Understand the differences between *Medicare A, B, C, D* – Supplemental coverage and managed care
- Demonstrate an ability to process *Medicare Premium Payment Program (MPPP)* applications
- Understand the eligibility criteria for *MPP* and verification for eligibility
- Understand the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) categories and eligibility factors for each program

**Domestic Violence 101:** This training provides the foundation for community members aiming to support survivors and help end domestic violence. During the first training session, participants will learn about the dynamics and forms of abuse, including patterns of abusive behaviors, the cycle of violence, power and control tactics and the various barriers survivors face.

**Knowledge Transfer Training:** The purpose of these sessions is to communicate the system updates/changes to the attendees. The learning goals are:

- Explain new knowledge transfer process for releases
- Review each new/updated QRG, flash, etc. related to the upcoming release in the month of November.
- Recognize the end user impact of the system updates

**Health and Insurance and Resource Coverage:** This training covers the policy surrounding countable and excluded resources for *Medicaid* and *Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS)* applications and renewals. Participants will view resource documentation, understand how to calculate total countable resources and be able to enter resources into the Integrated Eligibility System (IES) system.

**Income and Health Insurance:** This training covers the policy surrounding income, including income disregards and exclusions for *Medicaid* and *LTSS* applications and renewals. Participants will understand how to compare an applicant's income to income standards as well as be able to enter income into the IES system.

#### **Ex-Parte' Training Series:**

- **Medicaid Overview:** Participants will learn policy as it relates to Ex-Parte' *Medicaid* and recent enhancements made to *RIBridges* to support the policy. Enhancements include Special Circumstances Review screen, XPR icon, and Ex-Parte' *Medicaid* Review screen. The Ex-Parte' *Medicaid* overview, timeline and flow chart will lay the foundation for Ex-Parte' *Medicaid* and all modules included in this training. Participants will learn what occurs when an individual is facing possible closure to their current *Medicaid*, Ex-Parte' policy, how the Special Circumstances questions are a potential gateway to other forms of *Medicaid* and screen enhancements made in *RIBridges* to support Ex-Parte' *Medicaid*.
- **Pre-screening Medicaid:** This is for participants to learn how the pre-screening process works for individuals who are facing potential closure to their current *Medicaid*, the role of the IES, what occurs in the Customer Portal and Worker Portal, and to practice a scenario in the *RIBridges* system. The Ex-Parte' Pre-screening *Medicaid* session will provide participants with an understanding of how the pre-screening process occurs for individuals who are facing potential closure to their current Medicaid. Participants will learn the role of the IES and what occurs in the Customer Portal and Worker Portal for Ex-Parte'. Lastly, participants will be provided with an opportunity to practice a pre-screening exercise in *RIBridges*.

**RI Works Eligibility Concepts:** The *RI Works* (RIW) Basics Eligibility Concepts session will provide participants with an overview of the *RI Works* program. In this session, participants will learn the history and purpose of *RI Works* as well as the financial and non-financial requirements to meet program eligibility. This is an introductory session designed for all staff to participate in. Additionally, this training session is a prerequisite for the *RI Works* Program training coming this winter that will include key concepts (i.e., Work E&T, Loco Parentis, Non-Citizen, Domestic Violence Waivers) and practice in *RIBridges*.

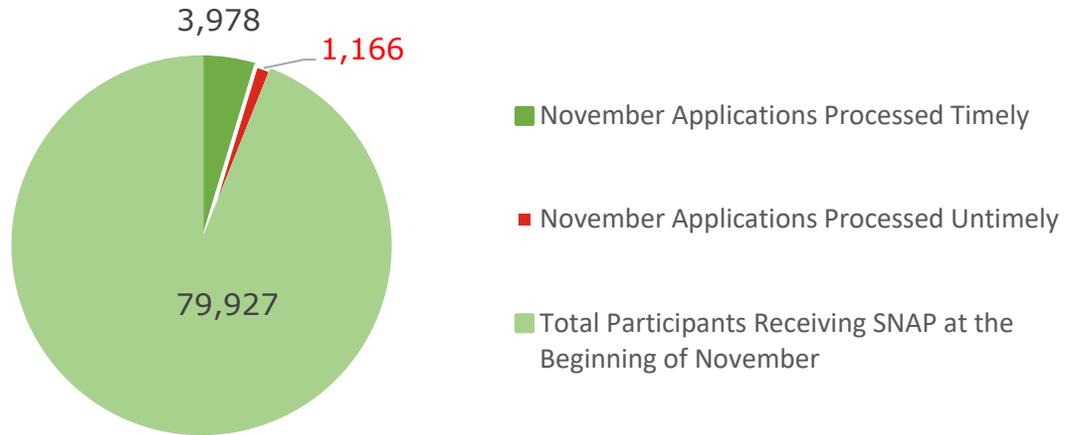
## PENDING NEW APPLICATIONS

The State continues to prioritize access to benefits. As of December 14, 2020, the number of pending new applications across all programs was **4,359**. The total of overdue, pending applications awaiting State action was **1,428**.

	Not Overdue			Overdue			Total
	Client	State	Total	Client	State	Total	
<b>SNAP Expedited</b>	45	54	99	32	36	68	<b>167</b>
<b>SNAP Non-Expedited</b>	930	523	1,453	97	45	142	<b>1,595</b>
<b>CCAP</b>	17	109	126	10	15	25	<b>151</b>
<b>GPA Burial</b>	1	6	7	0	2	2	<b>9</b>
<b>SSP</b>	0	60	60	0	10	10	<b>70</b>
<b>GPA</b>	15	20	35	20	22	42	<b>77</b>
<b>RIW</b>	101	99	200	20	54	74	<b>274</b>
<b>Undetermined Medical</b>	7	276	283	33	980	1,013	<b>1,296</b>
<b>Medicaid-MAGI</b>	1	3	4	23	29	52	<b>56</b>
<b>MPP</b>	4	32	36	3	4	7	<b>43</b>
<b>Complex Medicaid</b>	11	22	33	13	79	92	<b>125</b>
<b>LTSS</b>	69	265	334	10	152	162	<b>496</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,201</b>	<b>1,469</b>	<b>2,670</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>1,428</b>	<b>1,689</b>	<b>4,359</b>

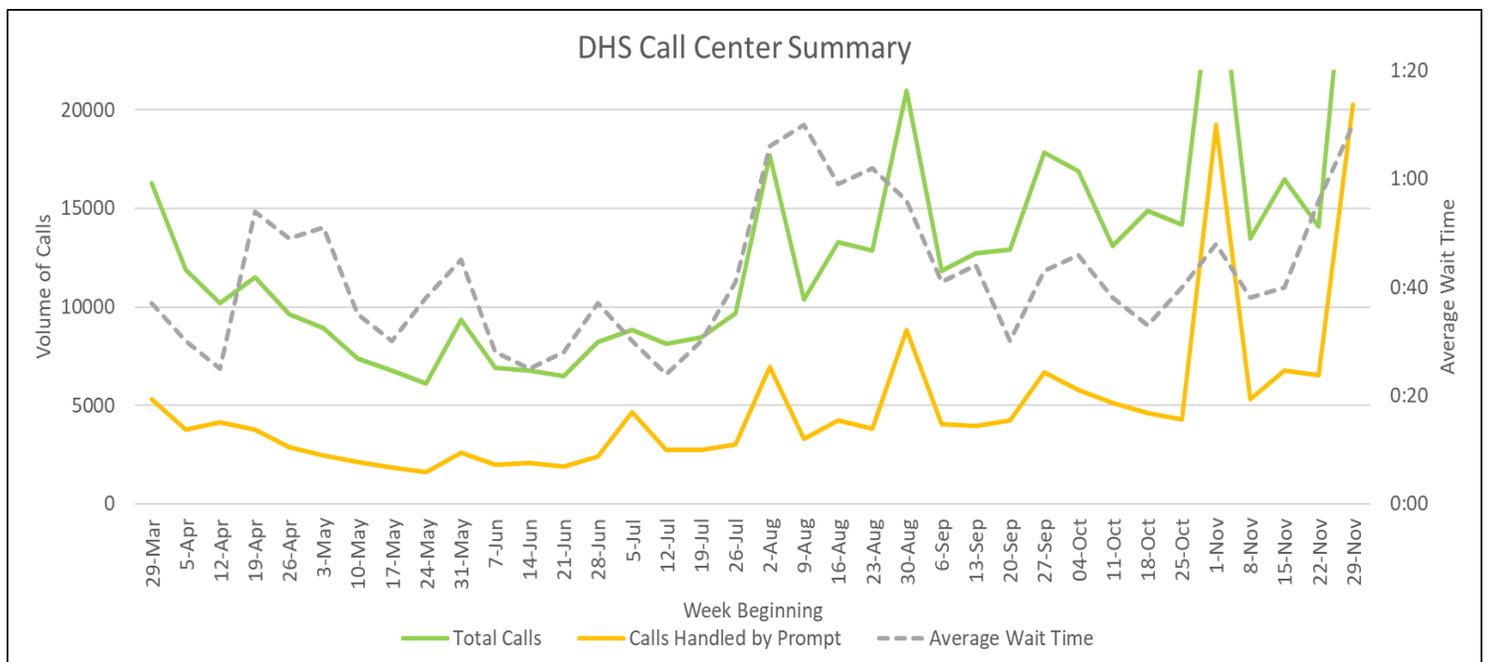
## SNAP TIMELINESS

In November 2020, SNAP benefits were issued timely to nearly **79,927** households. Despite the impact of COVID-19, more than **77** percent of new SNAP applications were timely processed. The number of applications not timely processed represents less than 1.5 percent of the SNAP population receiving benefits.



## CALL CENTER

For the month of November 2020, the average wait time was **50 minutes, 42 seconds**. The busiest week in November was the month beginning on November 29<sup>th</sup>, which included the 1<sup>st</sup> of December. There were **32,091** calls then. The average weekly number of weekly calls for the week was **19,128** calls. With the close of lobby facing operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DHS Call Center capacity was increased to accommodate customer interviews and questions regarding benefits.



## CCAP OFF-CYCLE PAYMENTS

Below are the total number of batch payments made to child care providers between 11/16-12/15/2020.

Batch	Date Issued	# of Providers	Amount after Union/PAC removed
12	11/17/2020	570	\$2,365,587
12A	11/19/2020	7	\$17,947
12B	N/A	N/A	N/A
13	11/30/2020	571	\$2,326,501
13A	12/04/2020	11	\$19,615
13B	12/11/2020	20	\$40,859

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (12 & 12A)	577	\$2,383,533
Off-cycle (10A)	7	\$17,947
Provider off-cycle/total	1.23%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	0.76%	-

	Providers	Payments
Total Batch (13, 13A & 13B)	602	\$2,386,975
Off-cycle (13A & 13B)	31	\$60,475
Provider off-cycle/total	5.43%	-
Payments off-cycle/total	2.53%	-

## LTSS INTERIM PAYMENTS

We continue to make progress in reducing the LTSS backlog of applications. As of this submission, there are **152** overdue LTSS applications pending State action.

Through the contingency process, which ensures nursing and assisted living facilities receive prompt reimbursement from the State, Rhode Island has paid out approximately \$194,000 in interim payments to facilities for the State Fiscal Year 2021. The fiscal year for 2021 began on July 1, 2020.

Our payment reconciliation process remains ongoing as we continue to meet with long term care facilities across the state. In total, the State has paid approximately \$149 million, and we have collected about \$103 million in reconciliation payments so far from nursing home facilities. This represents approximately 69 percent of the total amount of contingency payments made.

## UPDATE ON RECERTIFICATIONS PROCESS

The State has verified that Medicaid renewals were appropriately initiated by the RIBridges System in compliance with the CMS approved renewal plan.

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH FEDERAL PARTNERS

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are important partners to the State. We continue to communicate regularly to review progress with the RIBridges system. There were no UHIP related correspondences with our federal partners during this reporting period.